

April 12, 2000

The Honorable Frank Lautenberg
506 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Senator Lautenberg:

The American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) applauds your leadership in promoting a new way of generating financial investments in passenger rail capital projects. As you know, ARTBA supports an integrated, multi-modal U. S. transportation network that includes passenger rail and we fully support S.1900, the High-Speed Rail Investment Act.

Given the very significant unmet highway capital needs facing the nation, ARTBA opposes, as a matter of longstanding policy, the use of Highway Trust Fund (HTF) revenues for passenger rail investments. We could not support legislation that proposes such a diversion of federal highway user fees.

S.1900, however, as a stand-alone bill, offers a welcome and innovative approach that does not set up a "zero sum" competition for finite HTF resources between highway investment and passenger rail investment. Moreover, such a financing mechanism also helps to alleviate the pressures during the appropriations process to increase Amtrak funding by establishing its own revenue stream. This—in effect—may allow highway funding to increase due to greater flexibility within Function 400 because of alternative funding for Amtrak.

We support your initiative and look forward to working with you to pass S.1900 this year.

Sincerely,



T. Peter Ruane
President & CEO